



*EPA expressed lack of objections  
for the proposed action.*

94-047-NPS

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
REGION 10

1200 Sixth Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98101

**JUL 25 1996**

Reply To  
Attn Of: ECO-088

Sarah Bransom  
National Park Service, DSC-RP  
P.O. Box 25287  
Denver, CO 80225-0287

Dear Ms. Bransom:

In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, we have reviewed the **Elwha River Ecosystem Restoration Implementation, Draft Environmental Impact Statement (draft EIS)**. The draft EIS analyzes three alternatives to meeting the need to return the Elwha River to its natural, self-regulating state. The action alternatives would remove the Elwha and Glines Canyon dams which presently block fish passage up the Elwha River located on the north tip of the Olympic Peninsula in Washington.

The Environmental Protection Agency strongly supports the removal of both dams. Historically, 10 anadromous fish runs were present in the Elwha. These fish sustained more than 22 different species of wildlife that fed on them including the threatened bald eagle, marbled murrelet and Stellar sea lion. The recovery of this potentially pristine ecosystem is very valuable in our eyes. This is an important opportunity that cannot be ignored for its potential benefits to fish, wildlife, and those people who live, work, study, and recreate along the river.

For the Lower Elwha S'Klallam Indian Tribe this project offers the potential for a tremendous increase in the amount of salmon for tribal consumption. The United States has a unique relationship with Native American tribal governments which requires that activities that will affect tribes should be implemented in a knowledgeable, sensitive manner respectful of tribal sovereignty. Tribal government rights and concerns must be considered during the development of such activities. This project would have a very favorable impact on tribal interests.

It is extremely rare that we, as a nation, have the opportunity to put something back that we have taken from the land. Since the Elwha River flows from the Olympic National Park, which is virtually untouched by development, the amount of money spent on this project will go a long way toward improving the functions and values of the aquatic system associated with the river. In contrast, we've spent billions of dollars attempting to restore the Columbia

River aquatic ecosystem and although we consistently make progress toward this end, we see results in much smaller increments than we would see in the Elwha.

Based on our review, we have rated the draft EIS LO (Lack of Objections). This rating and a summary of our comments will be published in the *Federal Register*. An explanation of our ratings system is attached.

If you have any questions, or would like to follow up on any information in this letter, please contact John Bregar in our Environmental Review Section at (206) 553-1984.

Sincerely,

  
Richard B. Parkin, Manager  
Geographic Implementation Unit